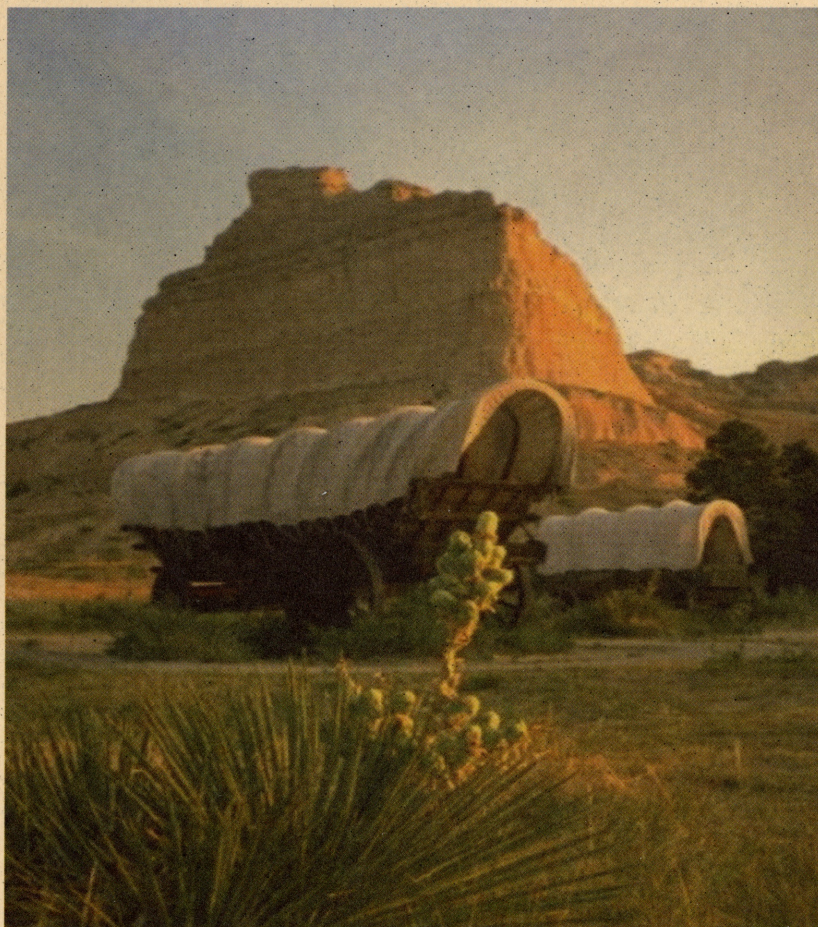


THE 1849 DEATH VALLEY PIONEERS

Where Did They Go?
What Did They Do?



By
Mary and Marvin Jensen
Edited By
Judith Bedell

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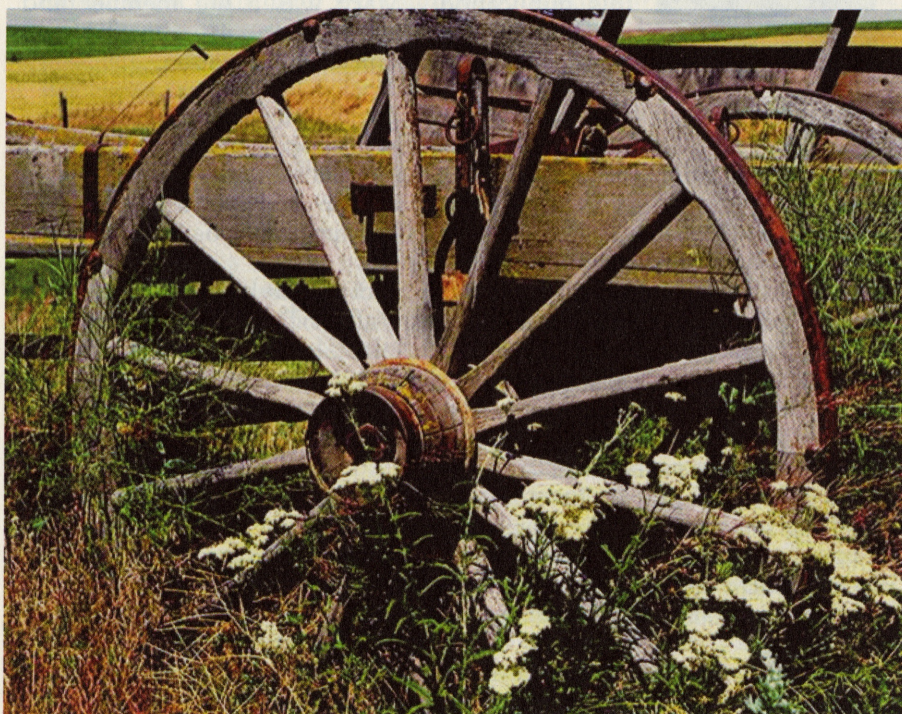
Published for the

56th Death Valley '49er Encampment

November 9 through 13, 2005

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Dedication
Mary Alice Jensen
1934 - 2005



This Keepsake is dedicated to Mary Alice Jensen, a direct descendent of Harry and Mary Wade, two of the 1849 pioneers that crossed Death Valley in a covered wagon. Today, the Wade Monument, located at the south end of Death Valley on Highway 127, commemorates this family's journey. Mary lost her five-year battle with cancer on May 18, 2005. Her genealogy skills and tireless research on the pioneers is the basis for this publication. Mary was a life member and director of the Death Valley '49ers. She will certainly be missed, but never forgotten.

Preface

In preparation for the 1999 Sesquicentennial Mary Jensen began researching the Death Valley Pioneers of 1849 and what happened to them once they reached civilization. This publication celebrates the stories of some of those courageous people.

Included also are the stories of some of the Jayhawkers who never completed the journey through Death Valley. They were part of the wagon train when it was formed near Salt Lake City, Utah but turned back when they reached the impasse at Mt. Misery to follow the route taken by Capt. Jefferson Hunt. Their stories are included due to the relationships they formed with the Death Valley pioneers as recorded in memoirs and journals of the trip.

Every attempt has been made to be as accurate as possible in retelling the stories of the Death Valley pioneers of 1849. While doing research we discovered some spelling discrepancies such as *Rood* also spelled *Rude* and *Roods*. Whenever possible, we have used the first-person information in pioneer journals and writings as the basis for these stories.

Keep in mind what California historian Don McMillan wrote many years ago, "Any history should be as accurate as humanly possible . . . If compiled from the memories of men it can only be as factual as these memories allow. If written down at the time it can only be as reliable as the perceptive abilities and lack of bias the writers permit. If even completely honest eyewitnesses all agreed on details of any particular happening, lawyers would have considerable less business. But regardless of these human frailties we must never cease to gather and preserve as much of our history as possible." It is with great pleasure that we share with you the history of an extraordinary group of people who survived the hardships of the desert and gave Death Valley its name.

How the Wagon Train Began

On April 1, 1849, about thirty-six young men from Galesburg, Illinois and the surrounding area banded together to journey overland to the gold fields of California. One of the youngest was John B. Colton, age 17, credited with being one of the organizers of the group. They later took on the name Jayhawkers because of the number of jaybirds and hawks they saw along the Platte River. This is the earliest record of the use of the term Jayhawkers.

They crossed the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and followed the established Platte River route through Nebraska and Wyoming. At this time they were a happy and jovial group with music, singing and storytelling around the campfire at night. Along the way, other wagons joined them until there were almost 50 wagons with some 150 people. They finally arrived at Salt Lake City in August, two months later than planned. They were too late to take the route of the Donner party over the Sierra Nevada. It was decided to stay over until spring and try to earn some money. By October the Jayhawkers, along with others, grew restless and were anxious to proceed to California.

A wagon train, which included the Jayhawkers, was formed and they decided to take a route previously used by the Mormons. The route they chose had only been traveled by horseback, except for one wagon, but never with a wagon train. Captain Jefferson Hunt, a close friend of Brigham Young, was hired at \$10.00 per wagon to be their leader. The wagon train consisted of approximately 250 people, and about 100 wagons and hundreds of cattle and oxen. There were several families with small children in the group. The going was slow due to the terrain and the length of the wagon train.

Passing through the area northeast of what is now Enterprise, Utah, they encountered another party. The leader of that party showed them a map that indicated a shorter route to California. Capt. Hunt discouraged the group from taking the shortcut as it went through uncharted territory. He warned the group that he would be obligated to stay on the planned route if even only one wagon chose not to take the short cut. Most of the group decided to take the shortcut but a few remained with Capt. Hunt. Everything went well for a few days until their progress was halted when they came upon a steep cliff that extended many miles in both directions. Today the area is known as Beaver Dam Wash.

After a few days of looking for an alternate route around the area, without success, a large number of wagons turned back to catch up with Captain Hunt. The pioneers named the area Mount Misery. A few more days searching and a way out was found around the rugged terrain. The remaining wagons headed west through what is now the state of Nevada. There they came upon very harsh desert conditions and searching for water became more important than searching for gold. What was once an organized wagon train soon became a fragmented group of people with survival being foremost on their minds.

The Jayhawkers, except for at least two wagons that decided to follow Capt. Hunt, stayed together but apart from the other members of the original wagon train. In late December of 1849 the pioneers found themselves in Death Valley but in several different locations. They spent Christmas there before finding their way out.

On February 4, 1850, the Jayhawker group reached Rancho San Francisquito, later known as Rancho San Francisco, near present day Newhall, and others followed. Of historical interest, the group that chose to go with Capt. Hunt had arrived in the vicinity of Los Angeles two months earlier without major incident.

The Jayhawkers

The following list of wagons and pioneers are as published in John Ellenbecker's book *The Jayhawkers of Death Valley*.

Wagon One

John B. Colton – John Cole – Sidney Edgerton



John B. Colton was born on August 11, 1831 at Monson, Maine. His family later moved to Galesburg, Illinois. When Colton was seventeen he decided to go to the gold fields of California and convinced some friends to join him. He is considered to be one of the first members of the wagon train group that later became known as the Jayhawkers.

After escaping from Death Valley weighing less than 100 pounds and having nearly died, he spent some time in Los Angeles recovering. There he met some Mexican miners who provided him with a horse, clothing and food and he headed north to Sonora. His time in the gold fields was not very productive and he returned to Galesburg, where he clerked in his father's store and later opened his own. On March 30, 1857 he married Elizabeth McClure and they had two children. Unfortunately, his wife and children died a few years later. He later married Mary A. Thomas with whom he had three sons: John B. Jr., Chauncey S. and Edward. On November 26, 1862 he was commissioned as a Captain in the Union Army as an assistant quartermaster in the 83rd Illinois Infantry and he was discharged in 1863.

In 1874 he purchased several thousand acres near Eddyville, Nebraska where he became a successful cattleman. His ranch was named Buzzard's Roost and was one of the largest ranches in the area at that time.

He included among his friends, Jim Bridger, Buffalo Bill Cody and Alexander Majors, the founder of the Pony Express. In 1904 he was instrumental in the dedication of a large monument to Jim Bridger in the Westport District of Kansas City, Missouri.

Colton was on the first Board of Directors of the Farmers & Mechanics Bank of Galesburg, and was also a stockholder in the Union Hotel of Galesburg. In addition, he was on the Board of Directors of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. Around 1890 he moved to Kansas City, Missouri where he owned the Kansas City Loan Company but he always considered Galesburg as his home.

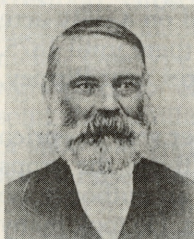
In 1872 he organized the surviving Jayhawkers into an association that every year, for 46 years, held reunions at the home of one of the members of the group. They always met on February 4, the anniversary of the day they reached civilization in 1850. Colton kept accurate records of each reunion, including saving newspaper accounts of the annual events. The records are now located in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. John B. Colton died on October 23, 1919 near Grand Island, Nebraska on his way home to Galesburg from his ranch.

John Cole, one of the Jayhawkers from Galesburg, died at an early age in 1853 while mining in California.

Sidney Edgerton was born in Moriah, Essex County, New York in 1811. He came to Galesburg sometime in the late 1830s with his uncle Jacob Edgerton and his cousins Marshall and David. On April 6, 1842 he married Lucy A. Clay, of Little Falls, New York. Edgerton was one of the few married Jayhawkers and his wife remained in Galesburg with their two sons. He did some mining for a short time in California and later returned to Galesburg. Upon returning, he moved the family to Cedar County, Illinois and they had another son and twin daughters. They later moved to Blair, Nebraska in the heart of Indian country. According to census records, his occupation was that of a carpenter. Sidney died in Nebraska on January 31, 1880.

Wagon Two

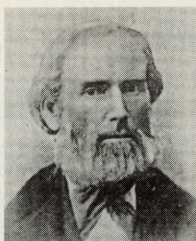
Luther A. Richards - Marshall Edgerton
Charles B. Mecum - Alonzo C. Clay



Luther Richards was best known as the "Little Deacon" because he was small, wiry and a tireless fellow. He was born on April 12, 1818 at Westminster, Vermont and came west with his brothers Roderick and Mark and settled in Knoxville, Illinois. In 1849 he joined his friends in Wagon 2 and headed west to find gold. When in Searle's Valley, California, Richards is credited with finding the water that probably saved the lives of the Jayhawkers and other family groups. Richards spent seven years in the gold fields where he evidently was quite successful.

Richards returned to Knox County where he purchased some farmland in Woodhull, Henry County, Illinois, which is 14 miles north of Galesburg. On November 24, 1859, he married Mary E. Davis. They had five children: George, Mary, Ella, Emma and Charles, all born on the family farm. The family remained on the Woodhull area farm for over 20 years and in 1882 moved to another farm near Beaver City, Furnas County, Nebraska. Richards passed away on June 15, 1899 at the age of 81. Five years later Mary Richards and three of the children moved to Arroyo Grande, California.

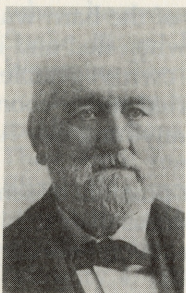
Marshall Edgerton was born on December 14, 1810 in Moriah, Essex County, New York. He came to Galesburg sometime in the late 1830s with his parents, Jacob and Mary, his five brothers and sisters and his cousins Sidney and David Edgerton. His cousin Sidney, also a Jayhawker, was in Wagon 1. Marshall died about 1865 in the Montana Territory.



Charles Mecum was born on August 25, 1822 at West Suffield, Connecticut. About 1844 he went to Galesburg, Illinois with two of his brothers and in 1849 decided to join his good friend Luther Richards and head west with the Jayhawkers. After crossing the desert Mecum fell by the wayside and lay down to die but his good friend, "Little Deacon" Luther Richards, revived him and gave him his biscuit and water and succeeded in getting him to camp. After the journey, he remained in California about four years working the mines and clerking in a store in San Francisco. At this time, home lots were twenty dollars each, wages averaged ten dollars a day, and bacon sold for a dollar a pound. In 1854 he returned to Galesburg via the Isthmus of Panama and the Mississippi River.

Upon his return, he often visited the Luther family and soon fell in love with Richard's sister Frances. They were married on November 22, 1854 and had eight children: William, Harry, Cora, Edwin and Maude, and three others who died in infancy. The family settled on a sixty-acre farm three miles from Woodhull, Illinois and remained there until 1875. Later, Mecum decided to sell the ranch and buy 200 acres near Rippey, Greene County, Iowa.

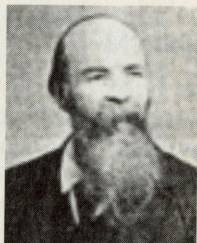
Mecum was an excellent farmer. He knew the proper way to enrich the soil, rotate the crops, prepare the ground and cultivate the crops thoroughly. He had a large orchard and he was also an authority on livestock and kept high grades of horses, cattle and hogs. He took many prizes at the County Fair. He taught this quality of farming and knowledge of stock to his three sons. Always willing to help a neighbor in need, he held honor, honesty and kindness in high esteem. John Colton visited Mecum on February 4, 1905 at a Jayhawker reunion. Charles Mecum passed away on February 21, 1905 at the age of 83.



Alonzo C. Clay was born on February 13, 1828 at Chester, Vermont and was only twelve years old when His family came to Galesburg in a covered wagon. At age twenty-one he left with the other Jayhawkers for California. Clay went to the gold fields and mined with fair success until the fall of 1851 when he returned to Galesburg via the Isthmus of Panama. After returning home, he purchased land and began farming. On August 15, 1854 he married Lavina M. Derby, also of Vermont. In 1868 they built a large home on the farm, which still stands today. They had three children: John, Charles C. and Martha. Clay became a well-respected citizen of Galesburg and Knox County and was very active in the community. In 1869 he helped organize the Farmers and Mechanics Bank of Galesburg and became the vice-president, a position he held until 1897. He was also one of those that helped bring the Santa Fe Railroad to Galesburg. He served for many years on the Knox County Board of Supervisors. Clay died on December 13, 1897 at the age of 69.

Wagon Three

John Groscup – Harrison Frans



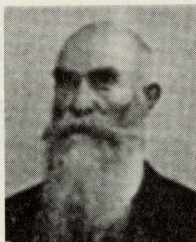
John Groscup was born in Germany on October 26, 1826. He arrived in the United States with his parents around the year 1830. By 1848 he was living in Knox County, Illinois and in April of 1849 he joined the wagon train and headed out west to California. He was fairly successful in the gold fields and in the mid 1850s used his earnings to purchase 160 acres of land near Longdale, Mendocino County, California.

Since his property was on the main road from Sacramento to Westport, Groscup set up a fix-it shop where he made oxen shoes and yokes. He made several unique types of oxen shoes, both leather and metal. One type was solid metal that fit each half of the hoof, a left and a right piece for each hoof, making 8 shoes for each ox. He also made a solid shoe similar to a horseshoe but without holes for nails. This type of shoe was encased in a leather boot. The latter type was almost solid with a raised piece of metal dividing the ox's cloven hoof and it was held together by leather.

Groscup was married in 1867 but divorced two years later. On July 27, 1871 he married Cynthia Peterson Cook, a widow lady with seven children: six girls and one boy. Together they had four children: David, Frank, Daniel and Nora. Cynthia died about 1880 leaving John to raise and educate the young family.

Groscup was a skilled carpenter and built a house and barn out of hand-hewn native timbers. The roof and oak studding of the barn was held together with leather straps. The leather was wet when tied and it shrank to tighten the framing together. He raised his own vegetables and also had a smoke house containing all types of dried meat: coon, skunk, snake, pork, salmon, turtle, squirrel and almost anything else he could smoke. He also raised sheep and sold the fleece.

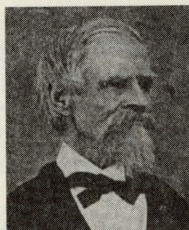
Groscup attended the Jayhawker reunions whenever possible or sent a letter. When Groscup retired, he turned the sheep business over to his son Frank. He continued to live on the ranch until his death on February 24, 1916 at the age of 89.



Harrison Frans was born in Kentucky in 1828 and later moved to Henderson Grove, Knox County, Illinois and joined up with the wagon train to California. He mined for a while in California and in about 1852 moved to Baker, Oregon. He mined in the Rye Valley region for nearly 50 years. For a while he was also a saloonkeeper. He married Mary Ann Brewer on September 1, 1853 and they had one daughter. Harrison passed away on January 16, 1902 at the age of 74.

Wagon Four

Urban Palmer Davidson – Charles Clark – John Morse



Urban Palmer Davidson was born October 29, 1825 in Marathon, New York, one of twelve children of Artamus and Mary Polly Davidson. The family moved to Knox County, Illinois about 1836. In 1849 Davidson joined with the other Knox County men and headed west to the gold fields of California. After surviving the Death Valley portion of his trek, he headed north and mined near Placerville, California.

This was the start of a very adventurous life.

He became known as "Lucky" because of the number of adventures that almost cost him his life. One of these was surviving the sinking of the SS *Golden Gate* off the coast of Manzanillo, Mexico on July 27, 1862. He also survived an explosion on a steamboat on the Sacramento River; the sinking of a second steamship the SS *United States*; and he nearly drowned in the Feather River when a boat capsized with only himself and one other passenger surviving.

He was the only survivor of an Indian ambush near Placerville, California. Davidson also volunteered his services during the Modoc Indian War in 1872-73.

Between his narrow escapes with death, he visited Mexico and Australia, did some mining along the Fraser River, British Columbia, and prospected throughout the Rocky Mountains.

Davidson went on to help establish and plan the city of Boise, Idaho where he owned some property. He established the first ferry across the Snake River. In the 1870s he moved to the Wind River Valley of Wyoming Territory.

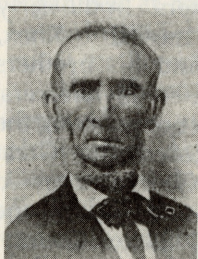
Reaching his mid-forties, he decided he needed a wife and traveled to Utah where he met Ida Stevens, an eighteen year-old Mormon girl. They were married and had six children: John, Mary Ann, Martha, Elizabeth, Grace and Arthur.

At the age of 73 he was still building houses in the Thermopolis, Wyoming area. In 1878 Davidson began writing to John B. Colton and on February 4, 1902 a Jayhawker reunion was held in Thermopolis. It was the first time John Colton had seen Davidson since 1850. Davidson died in Thermopolis on December 18, 1903 at the age of 78.

Charles Clark and John Morse were part of the Jayhawkers group that left Galesburg and made the trek across the desert to California. They did some mining and returned home. John Colton recorded that Charles Clark died on September 9, 1865 at Henderson, Knox County, Illinois but John Morse is not mentioned.

Wagon Five

Capt. Asa Haynes – Thomas McGrew – George Allen

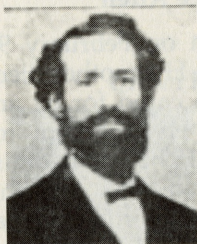


Captain Asa Haynes was born on February 9, 1804 in Dutchess County, New York. His mother died when he was an infant and he was cared for by an older sister for nine years and then was sent to another family for six years. At age 15 he rejoined his sister's family when they moved west to Clinton, Ohio. His schooling was limited to wintertime as the rest of the year Haynes worked on the family farm. In 1826, at the age of 22, he and an older brother bought a farm. Shortly after, he met Mary Gaddis. They were married on October 7, 1830 and in 1836 moved to Knox County, Illinois. Haynes purchased three hundred acres in nearby Orange Township and built a one-room log house. He soon developed a fine farm and started a brickyard. In 1840 he built a sawmill and in 1843 he erected the largest barn in Knox County. In 1844 he built a twelve-room two-story brick house. They had seven children: Nancy, Clark, Elizabeth, Ellen, Margaret, Anna and Charles. His businesses prospered and he employed a large number of people, many of whom lived on the farm.

In 1849 gold fever struck Haynes and it was off to California with his Jayhawker friends. At one point he almost died when he stated he could go no further. L. Dow Stephens and William Rood took their last biscuits and rice and made a stew and saved Haynes life. Like the others, he continued on through Death Valley and to the goldfields. He mined for only a short period of time but was successful enough to purchase property in Norwalk, California.

On September 24, 1850, Haynes left Stockton, California by boat for San Francisco and then by ship to Panama. He crossed the Isthmus of Panama and then went on to New Orleans, Louisiana and finally onto a Mississippi River boat. He walked the final 100 miles to Knox County, arriving home just before Christmas of 1850. No man was happier to return to his wife and family. In April of 1853, Haynes was elected to be the first Supervisor of Orange Township, Illinois. At one time he owned over one thousand acres of land in Orange County, five hundred acres in Iowa, and two farms in Norwalk, California. He spent the rest of his years in Knox County except for trips to Norwalk and Jayhawker reunions. He died at the old homestead in Orange Township on March 29, 1889 at the age of 85.

Thomas McGrew was born in Clinton, Ohio in the year 1823, the son of John and Rachael McGrew. Sometime in the late 1830's Thomas moved to Knox County, Illinois where his brother Charles and sister Melinda were living. In April of 1849 he joined the Jayhawkers for the trek to California. He never returned to Knox County but lived for a while in Oregon. Thomas died in 1866 in Boise, Idaho.

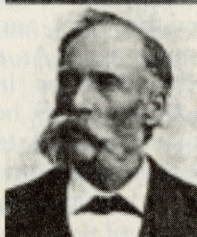


George Allen was born in Ohio in 1829. He was from a family of 5 brothers and 2 sisters. In the early 1840's some members of the family moved to Knox County, Illinois including George and his brothers Reubin and Almon. Like the other Jayhawkers, George decided to head to California not realizing the ordeal he would face as he crossed the Great American Desert and Death Valley. George remained in California doing some mining and in 1871 he found some mineral springs along Cache Creek, Lake County, California. He convinced his brothers Reubin and Almon to join him and they established Allen Springs.

It became a very popular resort and in 1875 was valued at \$21,448.64. The property included a two-story hotel building, 33 cottages, stable, stone house, bathhouse, plus all the furnishings. Unfortunately, George was not in very good health and died in San Francisco on September 11, 1875 at the age of 46. The brothers continued to operate Allen Springs until 1881 when it was sold. The resort closed in 1940.

Wagon Six

Thomas Shannon – Aaron Larkin – Alexander Palmer



Thomas Shannon was born on January 25, 1825 in Jefferson County, Ohio, but had his education in Coshocton County, Ohio. In 1846, when he was 21, the war with Mexico began and he enlisted in Company B, Third Ohio Volunteers. His service was for twelve months and after being discharged in New Orleans, Louisiana, Thomas headed north to Knox County, Illinois to make a new home.

Since Shannon suffered from a disease contracted in Mexico, in 1849 he joined the party of gold-seekers at Galesburg, Illinois and went west with the Jayhawkers to seek gold and better health. Upon reaching California, like most of the others, he headed for the gold mines and started mining on the Yuba River. He spent several years in Marysville, Yuba County and there he met Amanda Blackfield, also a native of Ohio, and the two were married in 1851. They had eight children, seven of whom grew to adulthood: Mary, Claude, Julius, Cassie, Lulu, Ralph and Cassius.

With the Civil War breaking out, in 1864 Thomas enlisted in Company B of the Seventh Infantry Regiment. Company B was organized at Marysville and first sent to the Presidio at San Francisco. Latter in 1865 the Company went to Tucson, Arizona. He was mustered out at the Presidio on April 26, 1866.

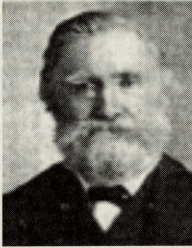
The Shannon family then moved to Los Gatos, California. He obtained a quarter section of farmland under the Government's Homestead Act. He held his claim for seven years while the Government decided whether his land was on Government or railroad property. He sold 75 acres of the original homestead and used the remaining eighty-five for farming, of which 6 acres were set aside for fruit trees and grapevines. It was a family business and his sons worked with their father. The home he built still stands in Los Gatos today, although it has been heavily remodeled.

Shannon attended several of the Jayhawker reunions and was a good friend of John Groscup and L. Dow Stephens, who also lived in California. On November 15, 1903 he passed away at the age of 78 but his memory lingers on in Los Gatos as Shannon Road was named for him.

Aaron Larkin and Alexander Palmer are two Jayhawkers who made it through Death Valley and then went to the gold fields. It is reported by John Colton that Aaron Larkin died in Humboldt County, California in 1853 and Alexander Palmer died in 1854 in Sierra County, California.

Wagon Seven

Edward Doty – William B Rood - Bruen Washington Byram

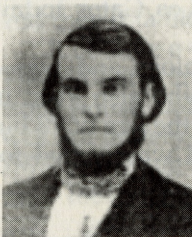


Captain Edward Doty was born on April 6, 1820 in Madison, New York. His parents were Ebenezer and Phoebe Doty and he had nine brothers and sisters, some of whom died at a young age. As a young man, he migrated westward ending up in Knox County, Illinois in the 1840s. In April of 1849, he formed a wagon with two friends and headed to California. Along the trail, when Asa Haynes became too weak to carry on as captain of the Jayhawkers,

Edward Doty was elected to take his place.

Upon reaching civilization, Captain Doty formed a group comprised of his Jayhawker friends and headed north to find gold. They formed a company and staked some claims along the Feather River. They built a small dam to divert the river so they could more easily pan for gold, but after their hard work, a heavy rainstorm washed everything away. This broke up the company but Captain Doty continued panning but never had much success. In the fall of 1850, he decided to go to San Jose, California and buy some farmland. He was a progressive farmer and purchased the first threshing machine to arrive in San Francisco. On March 5, 1855 he married Mary Ann Robinson and they had five children: Henry, Margaret, Frank, Edward Jr., and William.

In 1876 Captain Doty moved to Santa Barbara County, California and purchased 500 acres near Naples, now known as Goleta. He established a successful farming business. He became an honored and highly respected resident of the community and was a generous man always willing to lend support to those in need. Captain Doty passed away on June 14, 1891 but is not forgotten. A canyon on his land is named after him, Doty Canyon and the rifle he carried from Illinois in 1849 rests in the museum at the Death Valley Visitors Center.



William B. Rood was one of the adventurous of the Death Valley '49ers and became a prominent resident of the Arizona Territory. It is difficult to trace his early years but it is thought that he was born in Tennessee sometime in 1819. His last name has been written several ways: Roods, Rudes or Rhodes. The census records show that Rood is the correct spelling.

Sometime prior to April 1849, Rood migrated to Galesburg, Illinois and met up with the young men who were going to California to get rich. His adventurous spirit could not resist this opportunity and off he went with the others not knowing what was ahead. Along the route he became good friends with several of the Jayhawkers. In Death Valley there are two rocks on which he inscribed "*W. B. Rood, 1849*" and "*1849 W.B.R.*".

Upon reaching California, Rood remained a few years and did some mining with a group organized by Edward Doty. In 1855 he headed to the southern regions of the Arizona Territory. Once there he obtained title to a large ranch between Tucson and Tubac. There he prospered and he had plenty of cattle, a fine orchard and vineyard and more fruit than anyone else in the area. In 1858 he married a fourteen year-old girl named Felicita and they had one daughter Adelaide. Felicita Rood died in 1863 at the age of nineteen.

The early 1860s were a turbulent period in the Arizona Territory. Poor judgment by an Army officer set loose the Apaches on a war of vengeance. Rood became involved when a large number of Apaches attacked his ranch and he single handedly fought them off, even while wounded by an arrow in his arm.

In 1862 gold was discovered around the area of La Paz on the Colorado River. Rood sold his ranch for \$4,500.00 and headed west. He bought land along the Colorado River, north of Yuma, Arizona. He built a large cattle ranch, which he named "Rancho de los Yumas." It was located near the present day Cibola area. He soon became the cattle baron of the region and had over 4,000 head and owned a butcher shop in La Paz. He also owned a ferry to cross the Colorado River to Blythe, California.

In April 1869 he returned to Death Valley with three others to search for the lost Gun Sight mine that was supposedly discovered by two of the pioneers in 1849. Rood found no trace of the lost mine and to this day it is one of Death Valley's unsolved mysteries.

Rood continued to prosper and was considered one of the most important men in the Yuma area. He was elected to the Board of Supervisors of Yuma County. On April 29, 1870, tragedy struck while he was crossing the Colorado River. His boat capsized and he drowned. In his obituary it is stated that great sorrow came across La Paz when the people learned of his death as he was the friend of every one and was respected by all. Today La Paz and Cibola are ghost towns and little remains of the Rood ranch.

Bruen Washington Byram was born on December 30, 1821 to Joseph and Abigail Byram. He had five brothers and three sisters and was a direct descendant of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, two of the original settlers from the Mayflower in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

He joined his friends on the long journey to California. He became a good friend of Asa Haynes and scouted with him on the trail. William Rood and John Colton also enjoyed his company. He did some mining and returned to Knox County. Byram purchased 80 acres in Section 1 of Indian Point Township. On April 19, 1855 he married Vianna Adkins and they had two daughters, Mary and Edith. On September 27, 1864, near the end of the Civil War, he was mustered into Company I of the 36th Illinois Infantry Regiment, which at that time was in New Orleans, Louisiana. Bruen was wounded during that period and sent to the military hospital at Keokuk, Iowa, where he died on April 11, 1865.

Wagon Eight

John L. West – John W. Plummer – William Robinson



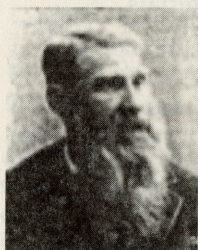
John Lewis West was born around 1820 in Massachusetts. It is not known when he arrived in Knox County, Illinois, but we know he was a Jayhawker and a member of wagon eight. William Manly refers to him as "Lew" in his book. He endured the hardships of the trip and when reaching Rancho San Francisquito, later known as Rancho San Francisco, he rested and recovered like the other Jayhawkers did. He then headed north, probably with other Jayhawkers to find gold. He ended up in Tuolumne County, California and remained there until the early 1860s. During that period gold was found in the southwestern part of Montana Territory and John evidently headed to Montana as he is listed in the 1870 census as living in Jefferson City, Deer Lodge County, Montana Territory. The mining camps had almost no law enforcement and vigilante committees were common. His occupation was always listed as a miner. West's brother notified John Colton that West died on January 12, 1898.

John W. Plummer was born in Kentucky around 1828 and like many of the other Jayhawkers migrated to Knox County, Illinois and then left Galesburg, Illinois in April of 1849 for California. He mined for a few years before returning to Illinois. He settled in Toulon, Stark County where he was a farmer, married and had a family. An article from the *Stark County News* of Friday, February 1, 1901, mentions that during his last few years John Plummer enjoyed telling people the story of the Jayhawkers and their hardships traveling through Death Valley and his days spent in the gold fields. He died on June 22, 1892.

William Robinson was one of the pioneers who did not survive the journey. Toward the end of January 1850, when he was only a few days from the Rancho San Francisquito, he became so weak that he could go no further. According to Manly's book, Robinson told his comrades that he would rest awhile and they should go on to find water, which they did. When they came back he was dead. Another account mentions his friends brought him to the waterhole and he drank too much water, too fast, and died. In either case it was a tragic loss after he had made it so far and was only a few days from civilization.

Wagon Nine

Edward Bartholomew - Noyce D. Bartholomew



Edward Franklin Bartholomew was born on August 8, 1828 in Wallingford, Connecticut to Noyce and Elizabeth Bartholomew. He had five sisters and four brothers. By 1840, the family had moved to Ogle County, Illinois and then in the 1840s to Elmwood, Peoria County, Illinois. Edward was twenty-one years old when he formed Wagon Nine, joined the other wagons at Galesburg, and headed off to California.

After some gold mining in California, he returned to Elmwood and on May 24, 1853 married Cordelia Kellogg. They had five children: Adelbert, Sophia, Edward, Luna and Florin. In the 1860 census, his occupation was listed as miner. For a short period of time the family lived in Kansas where Luna was born. They then moved back to Illinois where their last child Florin was born.

On August 14, 1862 Bartholomew enlisted as a corporal in the Union Army during the Civil War and was assigned to Company I of the Illinois 77th Infantry. In January 1863 his regiment took part in the assault on Arkansas Post, Arkansas. Edward received a disability discharge, with distinguished service, on February 1, 1863.

The family soon moved again to Buena Vista, Colorado where in 1880 Bartholomew is listed as a grocer. The family made one more move when Edward purchased a ranch three miles north of Pueblo, Colorado where he raised cattle. In the *Pueblo Chieftain* newspaper on April 14, 1891 it is written "while walking through his corral to see his two sons Edward felt faint and called for them. He then fell over. His two sons carried him to his house but could not revive him." Edward passed away at the age of 63 in 1891.

Noyce Dana Bartholomew, father of Edward, was born in Wallingford, Connecticut on April 2, 1785. In 1811 he married Elizabeth Hall in Wallingford. They had ten children all of whom were born in Wallingford: Elizabeth, Luzerre, Martha, Sara, Sophia, Samuel, Hezekiah, Noyce, Edward and Harriet. Bartholomew, Sr. was a farmer. He purchased some land and established a fine farm.

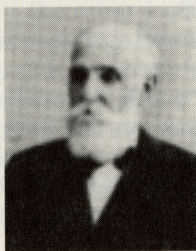
Bartholomew, Sr. was 64 years old when he joined the Jayhawkers. For some reason he decided to join his son Edward and head off to California. He did not complete the trip and at some point returned home to Elmwood. It is thought that even the early part of the trek was too strenuous for him. He passed away in Galesburg on March 11, 1869 at the age of 84.

The following pioneers did not go through Death Valley. When they reached the area known as Mt. Misery, they turned back, opting to follow Capt. Hunt instead. Their stories are included here because they are sometimes referred to in Jayhawker writings and materials.

Wagon Ten **Alexander Ewing - John H. Ewing**

Alexander Ewing was born on March 6, 1806 at Uniontown, Pennsylvania. In 1828 he married Jane Campbell and they had three children: Mary Louise, John H. and Anna Matilda. The family moved to Knoxville, Knox County, Illinois in 1835. In 1836 Alexander opened the first general store in Knoxville, a store he operated almost all of his life. In April of 1849, at the age of 47, he headed off from Galesburg to California with the Jayhawkers. After reaching Salt Lake City, he joined the Sand Walking Company wagon train.

Alexander and his son John did not take the short cut but continued to follow Capt. Hunt. Since they left the Jayhawkers they were no longer considered members. After some time in California he returned to Knoxville and continued his business. Alexander passed away in Knoxville on January 2, 1874 age 68.



John H. Ewing, the son of Alexander, was born on September 23, 1832 in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. He moved to Knox County with the family in 1835. In April of 1849, at the age of 17, he joined his father to go west to California. After some time in California he returned with his father to Knoxville and worked as a merchant.

In 1859 he went to the gold mines of Colorado and kept a journal of that experience, which remains with his family.

On May 3, 1860 he married Cornelia Weeks, better known as Nellie. She was a native of the state of New York. They had four children: William, Charles, Albert and John. They also had two daughters who died in infancy.

In 1870 John moved his family to Topeka, Kansas where he was a merchant. Then in 1871 the family moved to the newly formed town of El Dorado, Kansas, which at that time was a typical Wild West town with many wide-open saloons and the accompanying brawls and fights. Ewing continued his mercantile business until his death on May 20, 1898 at age 66.

Wagon Eleven

Three additional men supposedly went with the Ewings to California. Whether they made it all the way is not known. Thus far, no records have been found identifying the occupants of this wagon.

Wagon Twelve

Cephas Arms – Robert C. Price – Norman Taylor

Cephas Arms was born on October 5, 1811 in Conway, Franklin County, Massachusetts. His parents were Henry and Experience Arms and he had five brothers and six sisters. On June 16, 1839 he married Hannah Clark and shortly after they moved to Knoxville, Knox County, Illinois where they purchased some farmland and Arms took up farming. Two children were born: Charles in 1841 and Julia in 1843. Unfortunately, Hannah died on May 25, 1844. Arms met Louisa Taylor, the sister of his friend Norman Taylor, and they were married on January 23, 1845 in Knoxville.

In 1849 Arms formed a wagon group with Norman Taylor and Robert C. Price. They headed west to California with the Jayhawkers. Arms was elected the lieutenant of the wagon train and the journal of the trip has been published. He was one of those that decided to take the short cut but upon reaching Mount Misery, he saw the obstacles, and decided to return to follow Capt. Hunt. Since Arms and his companions did not go through Death Valley, John Colton no longer considered them Jayhawkers.

After reaching California, Arms did some mining and met with some success. When he returned home he purchased additional land for farming and soon had one of the largest and most successful farms in Knox County.

In 1850 Arms was Clerk of the Circuit Court and in 1862 he was elected to the Knox County Board of Supervisors. Arms was also very civic-minded, and particularly concerned about those less fortunate. He became involved with building the Knox County Alms-House (poor house) in 1866. Arms was also a trustee of Ewing Female University and Saint Mary's College, both of Knoxville. He was one of the most highly regarded and respected citizens of Knox County. On April 26, 1883 he passed away at the age of 71.

Robert C. Price was born around 1825, based on his age when the census was taken. He remained with Cephas Arms when they decided not to continue on the short cut. He returned to Knoxville, Illinois where he clerked in a store and, based on the census, appears to have remained single his entire life.

Norman Taylor – The only thing known about this pioneer is that he was the brother of Louisa Taylor, who married Cephas Arms.

Other Jayhawkers

Lorenzo Dow Stephens – Sheldon Young – Wolfgang Tauber

As the travel westward progressed, others joined the Jayhawkers and, after an initiation, were considered a part of the group. The following are the stories of three of those men.



Lorenzo Dow Stephens was born near Hackettstown, New Jersey on September 29, 1827. His parents were Richard & Eleanor Stephens. Around 1831 the Stephens family moved to Canton, Illinois where his father built the first frame house and in 1838 they moved near Galesburg, Illinois, where they remained.

He decided to leave for the gold fields and left Galesburg on March 28, 1849 with a group from Illinois and headed to California. In Salt Lake City, Utah he joined the wagon train led by Jefferson Hunt and became a member of the Jayhawker group. The arduous journey through Death Valley had its effect on Lorenzo and upon reaching Rancho San Francisquito he looked into a mirror and realized he resembled a skeleton.

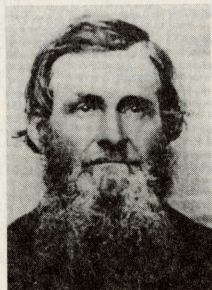
After recovering at the rancho he did a few odd jobs to earn some money and headed north to find some gold. He purchased some equipment paying \$16.00 for a shovel, \$8.00 for a pick, \$4.00 for a gold pan, \$50.00 for a rocker and \$32.00 for a pair of boots. He first mined on the Merced River and then moved on to the Tuolumne River. He experienced great success and his group would wash out the equivalent of \$200.00 per day in gold for each man.

After mining, he and a partner went into the cattle business at a ranch near Turlock, California. Stephens traveled around southern California and Arizona buying cattle for the ranch. On one trip to Arizona he was by chance reacquainted with William Rood in Rood's butcher shop in La Paz. They spent the night together reminiscing about their days as Jayhawkers.

Stephens led an adventurous and exciting life. He started farming in the Santa Clara Valley of California but soon sought out more adventure by taking a trip to Hawaii. After arriving in the islands, he did not like the weather and spent only a few weeks there before returning to California. He took up mining in British Columbia, Alaska and Virginia City, Nevada. At one point he bought a couple of teams of heavy horses and hauled lumber into San Francisco. Stephens was also involved with timberland in the Santa Cruz Mountains area of California. Stephens purchased the patent for the Garden City Windmill and manufactured windmills for many years in San Jose.

On December 25, 1867 he married Julia Ludlum, who was living in San Francisco. They settled in San Jose and spent the rest of their lives residing there. They had two children: Lorenzo L. and Emma.

Stephens attended a number of the Jayhawker reunions and was the last surviving Jayhawker when he passed away on February 10, 1921 at the age of 93. He was the last surviving Jayhawker. Stephens left behind a legacy in his autobiography *Life Sketches of a Jayhawker*. It is a marvelous account of the life of an adventurous pioneer.



Sheldon Young and Wolfgang Tauber were friends and left together from Joliet, Illinois for the gold fields of California. They were together the entire time including their planned return to New York. Tauber had just arrived from Germany and Young befriended him when they met in Joliet, Illinois. At that time Tauber spoke very little English.

Young was born on July 23, 1815 in Connecticut. He was the seventh of eight children born to William and Clarena Young. During his early years he went to sea and was always ready to tell stories of his adventures to family and friends.

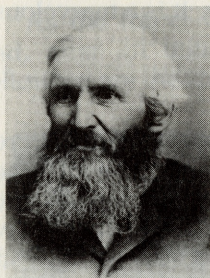
Tauber was born in Superahl, Germany. He immigrated to the United States and became a friend of Sheldon Young.

They left together from Joliet on March 28, 1849 to go to California. Their route took them through Galesburg, Illinois and along the way they met up with the Jayhawkers and became a part of that group. Young kept a journal from Salt Lake City until they reached civilization at the Rancho San Francisquito near present day Newhall, California. After recovering from their desert ordeal, the two friends headed north to the gold fields. They did some mining in the Sacramento area but when they went on to Downieville they met with great success and in a few months had enough gold to plan their return to Joliet. They boarded a ship in San Francisco that went around Cape Horn and on to New York. Unfortunately, on the journey, Tauber died and was buried at sea. When Young arrived in New York he immediately sent Tauber's share of the gold to Tauber's mother in Germany.

Young returned to Joliet, Illinois with his wife, Corine, and they had two children: Eliza and Albert. They later moved to Berlin, Maryland and then for 10 years farmed in Union, Missouri. When he sold the farm he moved to Moberly, Missouri where Young passed away on August 18, 1892.

Young kept a journal of his trek west and it has been published several times.

The Heroes of Death Valley William Lewis Manly and John Haney Rogers



William Lewis Manly and John Rogers are truly the heroes amongst the 1849 Death Valley pioneers. They are responsible for the rescue of the Arcan and Bennett families. One of the most vivid accounts of this deed is in William Manly's autobiography, *Death Valley in '49*, published in 1894. It is fortunate that the book has been reprinted and anyone who visits Death Valley should read it.

William Lewis Manly was born on April 6, 1820 in St. Albans, Vermont. His early years in Vermont and his years spent in Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin are well documented in his book. Near Mineral Point, Wisconsin, Manly first met Asahel Bennett and his family. Together, Bennett and Manly hunted, fished and trapped and a strong friendship developed.

In 1849 they were to come west to California together but a mix up in dates caused Bennett to start out with his family before Manly returned from Mineral Point where he was looking to buy a pony. Manly then started out by himself and later met traveling companions including John Rogers.

When Manly and Rogers arrived near Salt Lake City they came upon the Bennetts and they all joined together for the continuing trek west. They joined the Sand Walking Company wagon train, took the short cut and ended up in Death Valley in December of 1849 with the Bennett and Arcan families and others. Without enough supplies for all of them to reach civilization, it was decided that Manly and Rogers would walk out to purchase supplies and come back to rescue them. Manly and Rogers left the Bennetts and Arcans and the others on the floor of Death Valley at a place now known as Little Sulfur Well. They accomplished their arduous roundtrip in three weeks time, covering about 250 miles each way. Doubting they would return, some of the pioneers left to find their own way out. When returning Manly and Rogers found the body of Capt. Culverwell just south of Long Camp. Manly and Rogers then led those remaining to safety, which included the Arcan and Bennett families. Manly and Rogers' feat is one of the most heroic rescues in California history.

After reaching the Los Angeles area the families went their separate ways. Manly mined for a while in Mariposa County and Georgetown, California. His idea was to find enough gold to return home and purchase a farm. He succeeded and returned to Wisconsin, but soon after returned to California to a better climate. For about two years he prospected with success. He traveled around California often meeting former 49'er companions. In 1859 he purchased a farm on the outskirts of San Jose, California and on July 10, 1862 he married Mary Woods, of Lodi. They never had any children.

In 1871 Manly sold his ranch and he and Mary moved into a house in the city of San Jose and they lived there the remainder of their lives. Manly passed away on February 5, 1903 at the age of 83. He is buried in the cemetery in Woodbridge, California a town named after Jeremiah Woods, Manly's father in-law. A monument was recently built at the gravesite by the Death Valley '49ers and E Clampus Vitus.

John Roger's accomplishments with Manly are well documented but details of his life after escaping from Death Valley are not well known. He was born in Tennessee around 1822. He and Manly became good friends while traveling together before Death Valley and during their life threatening Death Valley experience. There are records that indicate that Rogers was a butcher by trade. In 1852, Rogers was the first constable for the township of Gilroy, California. Evidently Rogers went on to work in the quicksilver mines for a few years and contracted mercury poisoning. This resulted in the amputation of portions of both feet. He was a farmer in Merced County, California and owned his own farm but later sold it. In later life he lived near Merced with the Ellis family. He was their uncle. During that time, even with his loss of mobility, he was able to operate some farming equipment.

There have been two items published about John Rogers. One is "John Rogers, Death Valley's Neglected Hero" an article that appeared in a periodical and the other is *John Rogers, Death Valley's Unsung Hero*. The latter is Death Valley Keepsake No. 39 published for the 1999 Sesquicentennial of the 1849 wagon train. John Rogers died in Merced on December 29, 1906 at the age of 84 shortly after he attempted to take his own life.



Looking up at a portion of the place the pioneers named Mt. Misery as seen from Beaver Dam Wash State Park on the Utah/Nevada border east of Caliente, Nevada.

The Family Wagons

There were four families with wagons that decided to take the shortcut near Enterprise, Utah. These included the Arcan family with one child, the Bennett family with three children, the Brier family with three children and the Wade family with four children.

The Arcan Family

Jean Baptiste – Abigail – Charles



Jean (John) Baptiste Arcan was born on April 14, 1813 at Versailles, France. His family moved several times before arriving in Illinois. He married Abigail Ericksen around 1846 and prior to leaving for California they had a son, Charles. They were part of the Sand Walking Company wagon train that was guided by Capt. Hunt. After Mount Misery, the Arcans traveled with the Bennett family and also became acquainted with the Brier and Wade families.

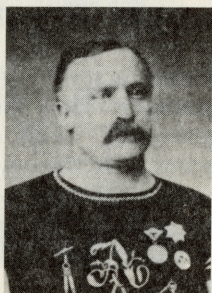
Upon reaching Rancho San Francisquito on March 7 1850 they spent time recovering and then arranged for travel to San Pedro, California to board a ship to San Francisco. Arcan was so thankful for the heroism of Manly and Rogers that he gave Manly his gold ring and Rogers his silver watch, prior to his departure. When the Arcans reached San Francisco they soon traveled to Santa Cruz, California where they lived the rest of their lives. After their Death Valley experience, Abigail wanted no part of traveling. Arcan went to the mines for a very short time.

Shortly after arriving in Santa Cruz the Arcans welcomed a daughter on July 1, 1850. She was named Julia in honor of Juliette (Julia) Brier. Abigail had promised Julia Brier that their first daughter would be named in honor of her. Unfortunately the child died on July 19, 1850 and was the first burial in the Santa Cruz Evergreen Cemetery. In 1860 another daughter was born and named Julia Madeline and later they had one more daughter, Abigail.

Santa Cruz, Arcan purchased a block of land on the main street and built a building known as the Arcan Block. It included his residence, a shop and a meeting hall for the Masonic Lodge on the second floor. In 1867 he sold a portion of the lot for \$700.00. Arcan was a carpenter by trade and built several buildings and houses. John Baptiste died on September 15, 1869 at the age of 56.



Abigail Arcan was born around 1814 in Massachusetts. She enjoyed finery and sewing. When it was necessary to leave most of the family belongings in Death Valley she refused to leave a fine linen tablecloth that she had woven prior to her marriage. She wrapped it around herself and carried it out. The tablecloth remains the property of an Arcan family member. Abigail Arcan passed away on February 24, 1891.



Charles Edward Arcan was born in Illinois on May 1, 1848 and was a year old when the family started for California.

In Santa Cruz he became an expert swimmer and was an instructor at the Neptune Baths in Santa Cruz and at the Del Monte Hotel, in Monterey, California. Arcan won many swimming awards. One time he rescued Governor Leland Stanford from drowning and was presented with a gold-headed cane. Charles was so proud of the cane that he called it the "Governor" Stanford cane.

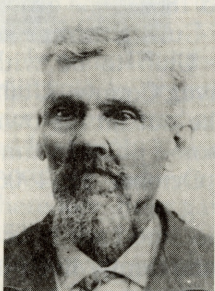
On March 3, 1868 he married his wife Josephine Chaurett and they had five children: John, Hattie, Charles, Josephine and Mary. His wife passed away in the 1880's, and on May 25, 1889 he married Etta Berry. They remained in Santa Cruz until 1891 when they moved to San Francisco.

During his life Charles had several occupations including swimming instructor, saloonkeeper, machinist, teacher and patrolman. He died on August 17, 1907 at the age of 59.

The Bennett Family

Asahel and Sarah

George – Melissa – Martha



Asahel and Sarah Bennett Asahel was born around 1814 in the state of New York. In the late 1830s, he found his way west to near Mineral Point, Iowa County, Wisconsin where he became a farmer and he also enjoyed hunting and trapping.

On December 17, 1840, Asahel married **Sarah Ann Dilley**. Sarah was born in 1825 in Berlin Township, Delaware County, Ohio. Before deciding to go to California they had three children: George, born in 1842; Melissa, born in 1845; and

Martha, born in 1848.

On June 7, 1847, Asahel purchased 40 acres near Mineral Point, paying \$1.25 per acre. A nearby neighbor was William Manly and they became very good friends and hunted and trapped together. When word of the discovery of gold in California reached their area, Bennett and Manly decided to head west together with Asahel's family. Initially, a mix up separated them but by chance Manly reunited with the Bennetts south of Salt Lake City. The Bennetts had arrived in Kanessville, Iowa in late May 1849 and joined a wagon train that was being organized. This wagon train also arrived in Salt Lake City too late to take the planned route over the Sierra Nevada and became a part of the Sand Walking Company guided by Capt. Jefferson Hunt.

The Bennetts decided to take the shortcut to California and their experiences in the desert and their escape from Death Valley are well documented in William Manly's book.

Arriving in the Los Angeles area, the Bennetts spent a few days recovering from their desert ordeal. The family then headed north to the mines and ended up at Illinois Canyon near Georgetown, El Dorado County, California. Bennett tried mining in several locations with some success. Around 1853, Bennett purchased property in Moss Landing, Monterey County, California. There, two more children were born: John Rogers in 1853, named for their pioneer rescuer, and Barbara Ellen "Ella" in 1856.

Sarah Bennett died in 1857 in San Jose, California leaving Asahel with a young family to raise. This proved too much for him and he gave his youngest child Barbara to George and Ann Scott who lived in Santa Cruz County and for whom the City of Scotts Valley, California is named. They adopted Ella and gave her the Scott name.

Asahel started drifting around with his remaining children, traveling in a covered wagon from place to place. Around 1858 he traveled to Cedar City, Utah and married Josephine Lowry, a Mormon, who had two small children of her own. In 1859, she remained in Utah while Asahel went to San Bernardino County, California with his children to do some mining. While there, he decided to place his two daughters, Melissa age 13 and Martha age 12, in the Plaza Church Orphans Home in Los Angeles.

Bennett returned twice to Death Valley in 1860 and 1862. One group included William Manly. They went to find the lost Gunsight Mine of 1849 but they had no success. Asahel returned to Utah to be with Josephine and they later moved to Beaver City, Beaver County, Utah. By this time his son George was old enough to strike out on his own while younger son John stayed with his father. At some point in time the family moved to Idaho Falls, Idaho where on October 11, 1906, Asahel died at the age of 82.

George Bennett was born on June 1, 1842 when the family lived in Wisconsin. He stayed with his father until sometime in the late 1860s and then went out on his own. The last record located on him is the 1880 census when he lived in Belmont, Nye County, Nevada. His occupation was listed as a miner and he was single. Family records indicate he died in Nevada but no date.



Melissa Bennett was born in Wisconsin on October 9, 1845. Around 1865 she married Horace C. Rolfe who at the time was the District Attorney of San Bernardino County. They had two children: Agnes born in 1865 and James born on April 10, 1868. Unfortunately, Melissa and baby James both died on April 25, 1868 in San Bernardino from complications following childbirth.

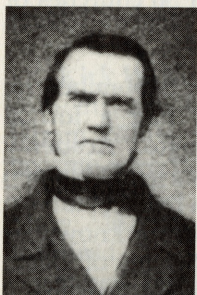


Martha Bennett was born in Wisconsin on January 21, 1848. On October 18, 1868 she married John F. Johnson, who was born in Denmark. They had eight children: Josephine, Lillie, Ella, George, Eva, John, Edgar and Martha. They lived on Catalina Island, California where John raised sheep with his brother and in 1870 they moved to Wilmington, California where John became a judge. John died on March 22, 1893 and Martha later married Joseph Swope. Martha died at Wilmington on February 27, 1910 at the age of 62.

The Brier Family

Rev. James Welch and Juliette

Christopher Columbus - John Wells - Kirk White



Rev. James W. Brier was born on October 14, 1814 in Stillwater, Montgomery County, Ohio, and later moved with his parents to Fountain County, Indiana. He graduated from Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana and from Lake Theological Seminary in Ohio.

He married Juliette Wells on September 23, 1839. They had three children prior to going to California: Christopher Columbus, John W., and Kirk. Three daughters were born after they arrived in California: Mary, Helen and Alice. Alice died in infancy.

In early 1849 the Iowa Methodist Board asked for volunteers to go to California to organize churches and spread the Methodist faith. Rev. Brier volunteered and went from Iowa to Salt Lake City, Utah where he and his family joined the Sand Walking Company wagon train.

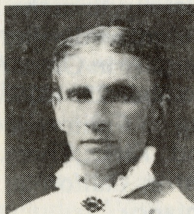
Upon surviving their desert trek, the family went to Los Angeles where Rev. Brier gave the first Protestant sermon in California on June 5, 1850 at the home of John G. Nichols, a pioneer who followed Jefferson Hunt's wagon train. To earn some money, Rev. Brier purchased half interest in a boarding house along with Lewis Granger, another pioneer that followed Capt. Hunt. They hired William Manly at \$50.00 per month to work at the boarding house.

Later, in 1850, the Brier family headed north to Santa Cruz, California where Rev. Brier was the first full-time pastor of the First Methodist Church of Santa Cruz. In 1851 he was instrumental in establishing the first college of higher learning in California, the Wesleyan College of Santa Clara, which today is the University of the Pacific at Stockton. He was a member of the first board of trustees.

For almost 10 years, Rev. Brier established or was the pastor of many early Methodist churches in northern California including those at Napa-Sonoma, Gilroy, Martinez, and Columbia. He was also a circuit rider and preached in some unlikely places such as hotels, saloons, and gambling rooms. At nearly 6 feet tall, Rev. Brier was an imposing man and his sermons were usually dynamic and forceful.

Rev. Brier was a staunch believer in human rights and his stand against slavery in 1859 prompted him to leave the Methodist ministry and joined the Congregational Church. He continued his ministry as a Congregational minister until he was over 75 years old. He was the pastor of many churches including those in Grass Valley, San Francisco and Marysville. Rev. Brier passed away on November 2, 1898.

It is worth noting that Rev. Brier's brother, Rev. William Wallace Brier, and his wife Elizabeth, came to California via the Isthmus of Panama about the same time and was a Presbyterian minister. He started a number of churches in California and founded the first Presbyterian church in Nevada. They were both ministers at churches in Marysville, California during the same period. For many years he was the minister at the Centerville Presbyterian church in Fremont, California and an elementary school in Fremont is named after him. The remarkable record of the two brothers is unheralded in religious history in California as together they either started or were early pastors of over 50 churches of the Methodist, Presbyterian or Congregational faith.



Juliette (Julia) Brier was born on September 26, 1813 in Manchester, Vermont. She had a formal education and graduated from Bennington Academy near her home in Manchester. She was a slight woman weighing only 90 pounds and less than five feet tall.

On the trek to California she became known as "The Little Woman" and later the "Heroine of Death Valley." Her courage and encouragement kept many pioneers from giving up. The Jayhawkers in particular thought very highly of Julia, although they did not care for her husband. At times she carried her youngest son, Kirk, on her back because he was so tired and weak. The newspaper article, "The First Christmas in Death Valley", is a very moving account of her experience in the desert and has been published several times. Upon reaching California, she continued being devoted to her husband and to raising her family. Each of her five surviving children received a good education.

On February 4, 1913 a Jayhawker reunion was held at Julia's home in Santa Cruz, California and those present reminisced over the years past and the all but fatal journey through Death Valley. In late March of 1913 Julia and her son John moved back to the home in Lodi, California where she died on May 26, 1913 at the age of 99 years and 8 months.

Christopher Columbus Brier was born on September 11, 1840 in Indiana. He was only eight years old when the family started out for California. As he became older he dropped the use of his first name and was known as Columbus. In 1867 he married Catherine Naylor and they had four children: Elizabeth, Charles, Martha and Rose.

Brier received a formal education and became a professor of mathematics and natural science. He spent thirty years as a professor and ten years as principal of the Urban Academy, a prestigious private school in San Francisco. At the time of his death on December 7, 1907 he was considered one of California's foremost educators.



Rev. John W. Brier was born on May 28, 1843 in Michigan. After a good education he attended a theological seminary and became a Congregational minister and served several congregations including Grass Valley and Lodi, California. In 1882 he married Mary Switzer and they had two children: Junius and Edson. On February 4, 1908 a Jayhawker reunion was held at Rev. Brier's Lodi home and shortly thereafter he wrote an account of his experiences as a Death Valley pioneer for *Out West Magazine*. He passed away in Lodi on February 24, 1914, at the age of 70.

Kirk W. Brier was born on May 5, 1845 in Iowa. In 1865 he started a store in a new town north of Ukiah, California. He later sold the store to Hiram Willits, for whom the town was named in 1888. Kirk Brier then became a teacher at the College of California in Oakland, which was later to become the University of California, Berkeley. In 1870 he married Mary Mead and they had four children: James W., Clive, Clara and Winifred.

When the family moved to Sacramento, California he became a popular teacher at Sacramento High School. At the time of his death on January 14, 1883, at the age of 38, he was the vice-principal of the school. In honor of his life and passing the staff, students, parents and many alumni attended the funeral service and the school was closed for the week.



The Brier Family About 1852

Juliette – Christopher Columbus – Rev. James Welch
John Wells and Kirk White

The Wade Family

Harry and Mary

Harry George – Charles Elliott – Almira – Richard Angus



Harry Wade was born on March 16, 1800 at Rochester, Kent, England. His parents were Andrew Waid (original spelling), a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and Ann Grant. Both were born in Scotland. Wade had five brothers and sisters. Harry married Mary Reynolds Leach on January 24, 1835 at St. John's the Evangelist Church at Lambeth, England, near London. Their first child, Harry George Wade, was born on December 18, 1835. In early 1837, Harry, Mary and their son left England for America on the ship *Toronto* arriving in New York on March 13, 1837. From there they went directly to Richmond Township, Tioga County, Pennsylvania where their son Charles Elliott and daughter Almira were born. A daughter Pristina was also born there but died in 1847 in Will County, Illinois.

Shortly thereafter, Harry's brother George joined them and they built and operated a sawmill, which was located on a branch of the Susquehanna River. The sawmill operation was very successful. At the same time, Wade operated a boarding house and did some freighting between Tioga County and New York City, New York. In 1844, a flood destroyed the sawmill and the two brothers abandoned the operation. With the loss of the sawmill, Harry decided to head west and George went north. Harry and his family then settled in Will County, Illinois. He purchased some farmland but continued to do some freighting. Another son, Richard, was born there.

On March 27, 1849 he sold the Will County land and headed west with his family to the gold fields of California. At nearly age 50, he started out with a well-supplied stout wagon, several oxen, a milking cow they called Betsy and a riding horse named Pet.

They arrived in Salt Lake City too late to continue on their planned route and decided to join the wagon train led by Jefferson Hunt. Wade purchased more supplies including three large metal milk cans to be used for water. The Wades decided to take the short cut and ended up in Death Valley and camped near the Arcan and Bennett families. When Manly and Rogers went on foot for supplies, Wade decided to leave with his family to find his own way out, not knowing if Manly and Rogers would return. They did find a route out for the wagon and arrived in the Los Angeles area in early 1850. The Wades were the only ones to actually escape from Death Valley with their wagon. A monument at the south end of Death Valley on Highway 127 commemorates that feat.

He again took up freighting and used the wagon to freight between Los Angeles and San Pedro to make enough money to head north to the gold fields. Wade did some mining near Fine Gold, Madera County.

Wade was not very successful and after being attacked by Indians he decided to pull up stakes and head over the Altamont Pass towards San Francisco. At that time, San Francisco was not a place for children so the family continued on to San Jose and settled for a while at Meridian Corners, Saratoga, Santa Clara County. There their last child Mary was born in the same covered wagon that came through Death Valley. Wade purchased some land and for a while did some farming at this location.

Wade realized that freighting was in his blood and learned that Alviso was the major shipping port in the southern part of San Francisco Bay. He decided to relocate to Alviso, California and started a freighting and stagecoach business with his son Harry George. He also operated the American Hotel, in Alviso, which burned to the ground in the 1860s.

Prior to retiring in 1865, he had been a Justice of the Peace, Public Administrator, Postmaster, warehouse owner, storekeeper, hotelkeeper and farmer. Wade died on October 13, 1883 of a self-inflicted wound.



Mary Reynolds Leach Wade was born in London, England on June 17, 1813. She endured the hardships of the wagon trip west. The most difficult part, as with the other women, was leaving most of their worldly goods behind in the desert.

At one point, while crossing Nebraska along the Platte River, some Indians stole Mary Wade's favorite three legged iron kettle. She was so infuriated that the following evening she crawled under the Indian's tent and stole it back. In Death Valley, on Christmas day she cooked a plum pudding in that kettle. She had saved the makings for just that purpose. Upon settling in Alviso she was happy to provide for the daily needs of her husband and children. She did serve as Postmistress for a number of years using a room in the family home as the post office. Mary Wade passed away on May 3, 1889.



Harry George Wade was born in St. Andrew, Holburn, England, near London, on December 18, 1835. He came to America with his parents in 1837. Harry George was 13 years old when he started west with his family and, as the oldest child, had to assume some of the major responsibilities such as tending to the animals and leading the oxen.

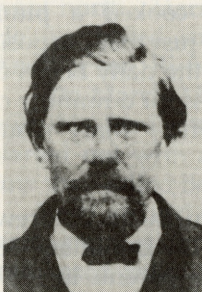
When the family settled in Alviso, Harry George was fourteen years old and immediately became a part of the freighting and stagecoach business. Later he bought teams of horses, added stagecoaches, bought some waterfront property and built a wharf, all in Alviso. Eventually he became the sole owner of the business. At that time, the mid to late 1850's, Alviso was a major seaport for supplies and passengers to and from San Francisco. Harry George and his father not only hauled the freight but also carried passengers to San Jose and other communities.

The cost of hauling freight was \$1.00 per ton for hay and grain and \$1.75 per ton for other materials. The Wade's freight wagons carried the building supplies up the winding road to Mount Hamilton to build the Lick Observatory.

Harry George built a brick warehouse and stables that still stand today. For a time he entered into partnership with his brother-in-law Capt. John Jacob Ortley, who was married to Almira. During this period he also ordered a pre-cut house from the east coast and it was shipped around Cape Horn. This was one of the first pre-cut homes in California and it is still standing today in Alviso. In 1863, during the Civil War, he joined Company C, 5th California Infantry Regiment, and was assigned to the Alviso Armory.

On May 8, 1869, Harry George married Mary Davis at the Santa Clara Mission. She was born in 1845 in Ireland. They had three children: George, Annie and Margaret. Mary passed away on January 3, 1906 and Harry George died on September 21, 1911.

Of historic interest is that in 1928 Harry George's daughter, Margaret Wade Higgins, sold one of her father's stagecoaches to the Wells Fargo Company. Wells Fargo restored it and on November 8, 1936, a few days before the official opening, this stagecoach became the only horse drawn vehicle to ever cross the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Today that stagecoach sits in the Wells Fargo Museum on Montgomery Street in San Francisco, not only as a symbol of Wells Fargo, but also as a reminder of those simpler days when Alviso was an important part of the San Francisco Bay Area's freighting industry and passenger service.



Charles Elliot Wade was born in Tioga County, Pennsylvania on August 12, 1838. He was eleven years old when the family came to California. As he became older he was a teamster for the family business and hauled timber and supplies. In 1863 he married Estafana Alviso the daughter of Domingo Alviso a major landowner from the Mexican Land Grants. Charles and Estafana had 15 children: Andrew, Daniel, Stephen, Augusta, William, Mary, Charles, Charlotte, John, Elizabeth, Walter and Benjamin. Three of the children died in infancy.

As a wedding present, Estafana's father gave them several hundred acres of farmland along the Alviso-San Jose Road, now North First Street. Charles left the family business and became one of the most successful farmers in Santa Clara County. The farm was called Rancho Rincon de los Esteros. At one time he was one of the largest strawberry growers in California with about 90 acres devoted to that crop and also grew blackberries and raspberries. A large portion of the land was used for growing hay and grain. Charles also had dairy cows and was extensively involved in raising horses. He built his family a large house on the property and also built several barns, a tank house and purchased one of pioneer L. Dow Stephens windmills. Charles and Estafana were divorced in 1904 and he died on March 9, 1918.

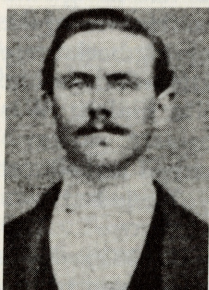


Almira Wade was born on June 24, 1840 at Tioga County, Pennsylvania. She was nine years old when the family came west to California.

While in Death Valley waiting for Manly and Rogers to return to rescue the families, the Wades decided to find a way out on their own. After a few days they were running short of water and were concerned about locating more. Almira noticed a few birds flying over a small hill not far away. They would disappear and then appear again. She went to find out if by chance the birds were drinking water. She climbed the small hill and saw a large spring. Today that spring is known as Saratoga Spring.

On Christmas Eve 1858, she married Captain John Jacob Ortley. During their marriage they had 11 children: Lydia, Julia, Lucy, Mary, John Jacob, Jr., Almira, Emily, Oliver, William, Dortha (died at two weeks) and Harriet. Emily was the grandmother of Mary Jensen, one of the authors of this keepsake. Capt. Ortley built the family a large home in Alviso where they raised their family and lived all their lives.

Capt. Ortley was one of the owners of the Union Line, small freighters sailing between Alviso and San Francisco, and also owned the San Francisco Bay Scows, *Matilda* and *Annie L.* For a while Ortley was in partnership with his father-in-law Harry Wade and brother-in-law Harry George Wade. Almira passed away on February 24, 1907.



Richard Angus Wade was born in Will County, Illinois on October 19, 1844. He was 5 years old when the family went by covered wagon to California. During his early years he was a teamster for the family business driving both the freight wagons and stagecoaches. He also worked as a warehouseman and clerk. During this time he also served as the Alviso constable. He left the family business in the late 1870s and became a clerk in a grocery store in San Jose.

In 1870 he married Sarah Jane Devlin but she passed away on May 15, 1872 at the age of 22. Later in the 1870's he married Maria Berryessa. There were no children in either marriage. Richard died on September 2, 1923.

Independents

A number of pioneers are listed as Independents. These are the pioneers that had no group affiliation or the group they were with disbanded as they started out from the Salt Lake City area. Rosters vary from book to book. Here is a glimpse into the lives of three of these pioneers.

John Goller was a master blacksmith and he arrived in Los Angeles in early 1850. He was born in Bavaria around 1827 and immigrated to the United States around 1847.

Upon his arrival in Los Angeles he immediately started his own blacksmith shop. Iron was in scarce supply and Goller would go out on the emigrant trails and try to find iron from which to make horseshoes. The cost of shoeing a horse at that time was \$16.00. One time he was commissioned to make 50 lances for the Los Angeles Rangers and a branding iron with the initials LA. He later started to build carriages and built the first hackney carriage in Los Angeles. His elaborate vehicles and patented spring buggies brought him much admiration. They were shipped all over California, especially to the San Francisco area.

In 1856 Goller married Pauline and they had 4 children: Pauline, Louisa, Mary and Christina. He was elected twice to the Los Angeles City Council in 1858 and 1868.

Goller's name is often associated with a story about a gold mine near Death Valley. In 1850 when Goller arrived in Los Angeles it is reported that he had gold nuggets in his pocket, gold he had hung onto under trying circumstance as he walked to Los Angeles. He was of the opinion he would one-day return to find the mine and bring back more riches. Several times he went back to the area but never found the mine. Sometime around 1893-94 gold was discovered in Goller Gulch. Was this the lost mine of John Goller?

John Goller died on July 7, 1874 and by that time he had lost almost all the money he had made in his blacksmith and carriage business.

Johan (John) Graff was born in Baden, Germany about 1825. He is part of the story of the lost mine of John Goller. Graff arrived in Los Angeles about the same time as John Nichols and Lewis Granger and bought a farm at the corner of Figueroa and Jefferson streets. The 1870 Los Angeles census lists a John Graff as living there with his wife Bridget and two daughters and lists his occupation as a farmer. In his autobiography, William Manly mentions that it was John Goller's partner that found the gold and that Goller wanted no part of it. In some rosters of the '49ers a mention is made of "Goller's chum" but no name is ever given. It is believed that the chum was John Graff. Manly mentions the partner went on to settle in Mission San Luis Rey to open a clothing store and he was killed while operating the store. Newspaper accounts of the event list a different name, not a '49er. The actual fate of Graff is not known.



Louis Nusbaumer was born in 1819 in the Grand Duchy of Baden in southeastern Germany. In 1842 he married Lisette (Elizabeth) Roth and in 1847 they crossed the Atlantic arriving in New York in June of that year. They lived in Newark, New Jersey where he was a bookkeeper. In early 1849 Louis and Elizabeth talked it over and they decided that he should go to California and return with sacks of gold.

Nusbaumer spoke very little English so he met with some German friends and formed the German California Mining Company. In March of 1849, they met in New York to travel west and used several means of transportation before arriving in Independence, Missouri on May 5, 1849. The group then headed west to California by wagons. Nusbaumer kept a journal in German the entire way. The journal was unavailable for many years. It was translated by his daughter, Bertha, in 1933 and later published by the Death Valley '49ers as *The Lost Death Valley Journal of Louis Nusbaumer*. It is still available in the Visitor Center bookstore in Death Valley.

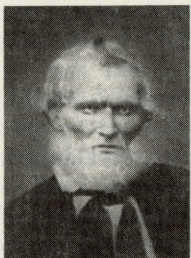
By the time they reached Salt Lake City most of the men who had begun the journey as part of the German California Mining Company had left the group. The remaining few members endured the same hardships as the other pioneers while taking the shortcut across Death Valley. Upon arriving in California Nusbaumer did some mining on the Merced River. He mined with some success and later in 1850 sent for his wife and son to meet him in San Francisco rather than returning to New Jersey. They were reunited and remained in San Francisco, except for a short trip to Oregon, until 1856. During their marriage they had four children: Albert, George, Emil and Bertha.

In the fall of 1856 they moved to an 80-acre farm in Washington Township, Alameda County, California. Charles Duerr, who was also from Baden, Germany, had purchased the property for Nusbaumer and himself. In 1857, Nusbaumer and Duerr rented a large estate located in Murray Township, in present day Pleasanton, for five years. Their main businesses were merchandising and raising sheep. When the lease ended, the two purchased a joint interest in Rancho El Valle de San Jose', still in Murray Township. Their land consisted of 3,000 acres, where they continued their business. Their enterprise prospered. They also made their permanent homes on this property. Today it is incorporated into the cities of Livermore and Pleasanton.

Unfortunately, Lisette Nusbaumer died on May 25, 1876. This had a devastating effect on Louis, as his wife had always been a source of encouragement and strength. Louis Nusbaumer died on July 10, 1878 at the age of 59. Nusbaumer was considered an excellent horseman, an experienced hunter and shooter and generous man.

Jefferson Hunt

Sand Walking Company Wagon Train Guide



Charles Jefferson Hunt was born on January 2, 1804 in Bracken County, Kentucky. In 1816 the Hunt family moved to Edwards County, Illinois where they farmed. In 1823 he married Celia Mount and in 1835 they were baptized into the Mormon faith. Jefferson and Celia had 10 children. In 1837 they moved to Davies County, Missouri, where they farmed for two years and in 1839 moved to Hancock County, Illinois and farmed there until 1846. On February 7, 1846 Matilda Nease became his plural wife and together they had nine children. In the spring of 1846 the Jefferson Hunt family moved to Kanesville, Iowa, which is now Council Bluffs.

On July 1, 1846, Brigham Young named Jefferson Hunt Captain of Company A of the Mormon Battalion to take part in the war with Mexico. They marched from Kanesville to San Diego, California. Afterwards, Hunt and his family moved to Salt Lake City.

In October of 1849, Hunt was hired to guide the Sand Walking Company to California. He was to be paid \$10.00 per wagon. When the wagon train separated into two groups over the famous shortcut decision near Enterprise, Utah, Hunt continued on the originally planned route with approximately seven wagons. They arrived in Los Angeles in December of 1849.

Capt. Hunt immediately returned to Salt Lake City to encourage the establishment of a Mormon settlement in an area that later became San Bernardino, California. In 1851, Capt. Hunt led a large contingent of Mormons back to California to create a settlement and remained in California until being called back to Salt Lake City by Brigham Young in 1857. During his time in California he did some mining and met up with some of the Death Valley group.

In 1852 he was elected as one of two assemblymen from Los Angeles County. As a legislator, he was instrumental in the formation of San Bernardino County. At that time he was considered to be the father of San Bernardino County.

Capt. Hunt returned to Salt Lake City in 1857 and remained there until 1860. He then moved his family to a new community that became Huntsville, located in the Ogden Valley. There, with two of his sons, he took up farming and grew hay. The family made one more move to a ranch near Oxford, Idaho. He remained there until his death on May 11, 1879. Capt. Jefferson Hunt was a frontiersman and a man of honor, known by many to be true to his word.

In Closing

As this collection of factual stories of the Death Valley pioneers of 1849 comes to an end, it is not really the end, but perhaps a beginning. Hopefully it is the beginning of an even greater understanding of and appreciation for the Death Valley area. As you have read, many of the people who crossed the desert floor in 1849 went on to have a profound influence on the history of the great state of California. Others returned to whence they came and made contributions to those respective states.

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following persons and organizations
for providing information about the pioneers.

Ancestry.com
Arizona History Society – Tucson, Arizona
Anita Crabtree – Lake County, California
Bear State Library – Exeter, California
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Death Valley '49er Publications in Print

50 years in Death Valley, Memoirs of a Borax Man, Harry Glower
The Lost '49er Journal of Louis Nusbaumer, George Koenig
Proceedings: Sixth Death Valley Conference on History . . .
Proceedings: Fifth Death Valley Conference on History . . .
An Unnatural History of Death Valley, Paul Bailey
A Naturalist's Death Valley, Dr. Edmund Yeager
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This Place Called Death Valley, in English
This Place Called Death Valley, in French
Death Valley in 1849, John Southworth
Goodbye Death Valley! L. Burr Belden
Death Valley Tailings, George Koenig
Death Valley Tales, Eleven Authors

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